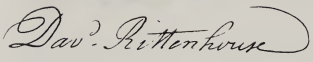


# The Rittenhouse Society Newsletter




"Bringing Us Closer Together"

Spring 1989 Volume 1, No. 1

Dear Friends,

**WELCOME to the first issue of the NEW... Rittenhouse Society Newsletter!**

In September Dave Bowers wrote "...in the first newsletter print as much as you can concerning the history of the Society." Within the pages of this issue I have reprinted a document written in 1976 which briefly outlines the history, goals and structure of our Society. At the conclusion of the document, I have included some of my thoughts for us to ponder.

Since this "first" issue opens the door for new input, I invite the entire membership to submit bits and pieces from personal archives relating to the Rittenhouse Society. Please give me a hand by sending photocopies of newsletters, previous minutes, press releases, articles, etc. along with your own personal recollections of our history. Then, in future issues of this newsletter we can begin to compile a true Society History.

One of the goals of your secretary is to keep this newsletter published on a quarterly basis. By doing so, it is my hope that we will all be brought closer together to exchange our thoughts and suggestions on how we can improve the Rittenhouse Society.

Since we are on the subject of *"thoughts,"* I thought that you would enjoy reading an article I came across recently. Originally published in *The Columbian Magazine* for March, 1787, and perhaps reprinted for the first time in 202 years within the pages of this publication, are David Rittenhouse's thoughts "respecting the Generation of Clouds in the Atmosphere." I hope that you will find his thoughts enjoyable.

Also included in this issue is an idea for a proposed membership badge along with an up-to-date membership roster.

Until next time,

Craig A. Whitford
Secretary/Treasurer

***Some thoughts and ideas on the Rittenhouse Society.....***

After careful review of the preceding document and in specific the proposed structure of the Society; it is perhaps time to take another look and reestablish the structure and goals of our Society. With the publication of this newsletter, I hope that we can work to reactivate and stimulate all of us to make the Rittenhouse Society an active organization.

I invite (once again) each of you to communicate your comments and suggestions to me for publication in this newsletter for review and discussion. Perhaps we can discuss them in greater detail at the 1989 A.N.A. convention meeting of the Society.

*I plan on having the next issue of the newsletter ready to be mailed by June 30, 1989. Please submit your comments, suggestions and ideas by June 15, 1989.*

At this time I offer the following items for comment:

1. Activate the Awards goal outlined in the preceding document.

2. Jointly organize with the American Numismatic Society a "Coinage of the Americas Conference" for 1991 or 1992 with the subject matter relating to either the **Mints of the Americas** or the **Mints of the United States.** The latter topic could cover the history of all of the U.S. Mints as well as a look back at 200 years of organized coinage. Papers regarding the Colonial Mints could also be included.

3. Become active in promoting new authors of numismatic literature.

4. Compile and publish "The Papers of David Rittenhouse" as a Society. What a project!

5. Work together on special projects for 1991 and 1992 promoting and educating people on the history of our Nation's Mint.

6. Compile and publish a listing of articles, books, etc. previously published relating the the U.S. Mint.

## PLANNING FOR PITTSBURGH '89

Now is the time for us to plan the 1989 meeting of the Rittenhouse Society. The Annual Convention of the American Numismatic Association will be held during the week of August 9-13, 1989 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center/Vista International Hotel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As in years past, I suggest that we meet in the convention hotel restaurant on Saturday, August 12, 1989 at 8:00 A.M. for breakfast and an informal meeting. If this seems like an excellent time for us to get together, please let me know and we'll make the arrangements. **SEE YOU.....IN PITTSBURGH !**

# MINUTES OF THE 1988 RITTENHOUSE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

The 1988 meeting of the Rittenhouse Society was held on July 23, 1988 at the Clarion Hotel in Cincinnati, Ohio during the Annual Convention of the American Numismatic Association.

The meeting was "called-to-order" at 8:00 a.m. with the following members present: Ken Bressett, Q. David Bowers, Grover Criswell, R.W. Julian, Walter Breen, Eric Newman and Hank Spangenberger. Invited guests were: Margo Russell and Craig Whitford.

Introductions were made with breakfast following. There being no old business, none was discussed.

It was agreed by all in attendance that Margo Russell be accepted into the Society.

Ken Bressett then introduced Craig Whitford as a Rittenhouse enthusiast, and possessing a strong desire to become a member of the Society. Craig followed with a brief introduction of his background and interest in David Rittenhouse, including mention of William Rittenhouse, America's first papermaker, 1690 *(More on this in a future issue of this newsletter)*. Discussion of the numismatic postcards produced by Craig's company followed. Everyone in attendance was given a set of 4 postcards entitled "Our First Mint."

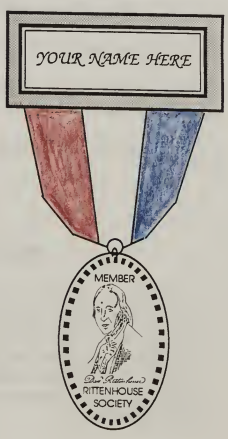
Several interesting discussions followed, including one regarding the purchase of old copper by the first U.S. Mint for use in casting gears, etc. and not for direct use in copper planchets. The upcoming Bicentennial of the U.S. Mint in 1992 was also discussed.

In closing the informal gathering Ken Bressett discussed a probationary roll in the Society for Craig Whitford as Secretary/Treasurer for 1 year. Grover Criswell moved that Craig be accepted as an active member of the Society; Ken Bressett seconded the motion - All were in favor. The meeting was informally adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

## Rittenhouse Society Membership Badge Proposed

At the July 23, 1988 meeting of our Society the idea of a membership badge was informally discussed. Upon further thought, I offer the following idea.

Elongate Philadelphia Mint, 1932 Washington Quarter Dollars with a portrait of David Rittenhouse in relief on the reverse of the coin so that the date and bust of Washington continues visible on the obverse. A hole would then be placed at the top of the elongate for suspension from a Red, White and Blue Ribbon attached to a nameplate. The nameplate would contain an engraved brass plate bearing the member's name.




The 1932 Washington Quarter Dollar was selected for this project because it represents not only the Bicentennial of Washington's birth, but that of Rittenhouse as well. Also, this unique Washington/Rittenhouse portrait combination would honor two great men of the first Mint. Since this particular quarter was struck in Philadelphia, the birthplace of our nation's coinage, it makes for a truly unique numismatic combination and membership badge.

This special Membership Badge will be made available only to members of the Rittenhouse Society.

The cost of producing each Membership Badge combination will probably be in the range of $10 to $13 each, with the nameplate engraving perhaps being the most expensive part of the project. I suggest, and this is only a suggestion, that each of us provide $25. to $50. to open a Society account to begin working towards our goals (soon to be defined) and out of this amount we will have the membership badges produced. Again this is only a suggestion and your comments and ideas would be greatly appreciated. If all are in favor of this idea, we could have the badges in time for the 1989 meeting of the Society.

THE

# COLUMBIAN MAGAZINE,

For MARCH, 1787.

## A Letter from DAVID RITTENHOUSE, Esq. to the Hon. FRANCIS HOPKINSON, respecting the Generation of Clouds in the Atmosphere.

(*Read before the Philosophical Society, Feb.* 16, 1787.)

DEAR SIR, *Bethlehem, Sept.* 9, 1786.

MY curiosity was so highly gratified a few days past, with a remarkable phænomenon of our atmosphere, that I cannot forbear giving you an account of it; and if I can make the description but half as entertaining to you, as the prospect was to me, I shall think my labour well bestowed.

Some of the principal operations of nature, and such as one would think must almost every day be exposed to our observation, are nevertheless somehow unaccountably, and, as if by design, carried on behind the curtain so secretly, that we are left almost entirely ignorant of the matter. If, therefore, once in half a century, we chance to catch nature off her guard, it becomes us to attend with diligence, and to give a just history of the experiment to others, for the improvement of our philosophical knowledge.

We often observe the clearest blue sky, in the course of a few hours, totally obscured by thick and dark clouds. But we know, very imperfectly, how these clouds are generated. It is of this process, however, that I am going to give you some account.

The beautiful valley of Wyoming is bounded by two parallel ranges of mountains, four or five miles distant from each other, running N. E. and S. W. nearly. The river Susquehannah breaks abruptly through the N. W. mountain, a little above the mouth of Leehawanie; it afterwards continues running along the valley for many miles, towards the S. W. with frequent serpentine windings. Wilksborough is situated on the S. E. bank of the river, eight or nine miles below Leehawanie,—and at this place there is a very extensive view of both the mountains, as well towards the N. E. as the S. W.

On the 5th of September last, the weather was very warm, with flying clouds from the S. W. until towards evening, when the lower clouds dispersed, and discovered a clear sky, with a few streaks of superior clouds, finely coloured, as usual, by the setting sun. The moon wanted a little of being full, and appeared very beautiful about an hour in height above the eastern mountain. A little above the moon there passed a long narrow dark cloud, which stretched N. E. and S. W. farther than the eye could reach, and seemed to lye directly over, and parallel to the summit of the mountain. It appeared to move briskly towards the N. W. and I expected it to pass off quickly, leaving a perfectly clear sky. Looking again towards the moon, a few minutes afterwards, I found the cloud greatly increased in breadth; its upper edge had advanced considerably towards the zenith; but its lower edge, where there seemed to be the greatest motion, had not changed place at all. I now found that the cloud was continually augmented at its lower edge, and that a thousand little clouds were constantly generated in the clear air, just below the great cloud, which by a brisk motion upwards, presently attached themselves to it, whilst the whole body of the cloud, by a more gradual motion, proceeded northwestward. I gazed at this appearance for the space of two hours, with pleasure and astonishment; during all which time the operation went on without any interruption, and with very little variety. By this time the whole Heavens were obscured by very thick and dark clouds, excepting the narrow streak between the eastern edge of the cloud, and the mountain, which still remained clear. I now went to bed, but have reason to believe, from the appearance next morning, that the cloud continued forming in the same manner during the whole night. Early next morning it began to rain a little, and more distant clouds arriving from the S. E. closed the scene.

When I first observed this appearance, a low cloud was just visible over the top of the mountain, and continued there the whole evening. It seemed to move slowly towards the N. E. This convinced me that the brisk current of air, which I felt constantly from the S. E. did not reach much beyond the mountain.

If we attempt an explanation of this phænomenon, the first difficulty that occurs is, whence could be derived that continual supply of fresh air, loaded with vapours, which furnished matter for such a prodigious quantity of clouds? It could not be from the N. W. for the cloud moved in that direction, nor by a low counter current, for the lower air was felt constantly the same way. It could not be from the S. E. for a low cloud was seen the whole time hovering a little beyond the mountain, and moving slowly in a different direction. I conclude, therefore, that it was by a direct precipitation of the superior air along the summit of the mountain occasioned probably by its coldness; for the next morning, in crossing the mountain, I found myself involved in a cold mist, which obliged me to wrap my coat close about me, tho' the air in the valley was still warm.

If the air descended directly on the mountain, it appears that the cloud or vapour, as soon as it was separated from the air, in which it had been dissolved, became lighter and mounted upwards with a quick motion, at the same time that it moved N. W. from the mountain; at least it seemed to do so: or, if this rising was only apparent, the motion of the detached parts of the cloud must have been much swifter at first, than it became a few minutes afterwards.

I shall conclude with proposing this query. Are not the cold summits of mountains the great and general means employed by nature, for precipitating the waters from the atmosphere, wherein they had been held in a state of solution, and thereby producing rains?

I am, dear Sir,
Your's sincerely,
DAVID RITTENHOUSE.

*F. Hopkinson, Esq.*

# THE RITTENHOUSE SOCIETY

Organization of the Rittenhouse Society was proposed c. 1955 by a small group of young friends who felt their ambitions and interest in numismatics could be better advanced through a united voice. It was hoped that by binding the group together for mutual help and communication, that each would exert a greater impact on the hobby through their research and work.

Founding members of the Society were: Q. David Bowers, Walter Breen, Ken Bressett, Grover Criswell, George Fuld, D. Wayne Johnson and Ken Rendell. In 1961 were added: Lynn Glaser and Eric Newman.

The first meeting of the Society was held August 26, 1960, at the A.N.A. convention in Boston, Massachusetts. (Reported in Rittenhouse Society Newsletter 11/15/60):

> Walter Breen presented the "charter" originally proposed "several years ago" suggesting the name Rittenhouse Society. 1960-61 officers were elected: Dave Bowers, president; Walter Breen, vice-president; Dick Johnson, secretary-treasurer. All present donated $1.00 to the treasury. Johnson agreed to furnish members with a Mint Medal pocket identification piece. Dues, age limitations, publications, awards, and admission requirements were discussed.

The second "annual" meeting of the Society was held August 19, 1961, at the A.N.A. convention in Atlanta, Georgia. (R.S.N. August, 1961):

> Eric Newman was elected the first honorary member. Lynn Glaser was admitted to membership. Ken Rendell resigned. Aims of the Society were discussed. Age requirements were dropped. The possibility of a publication was explored.

Many proposals for the structure of the Society have been suggested in the past. A more or less general summary is as follows:

General purpose of the Society is the encouragement and recognition of numismatic research and knowledge.

**Membership requirements:** Interest and knowledge of numismatics. Authorship of articles and books. By invitation only.

**Dues:** Yearly $2.00 to $5.00. Initiation fee of $25.00 to $100.00

**Meeting dates:** Annually at some major convention.

**Awards:** Rittenhouse award to be given to the A.N.A. exhibit displaying the most original research. Another award could be given for the book or article of the year showing the most original research.

**Publications:** The Society should publish a bulletin for its members and encourage the publication of society sponsored books and monographs.

**Scope:** U.S. Coins and Paper Money — including the Colonial period.